



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 30 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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May 9, 2014

The Honorable Mike Gatto, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Chairman:

RE: AB 1902 (Bonta), **As Amended April 9, 2014–SUPPORT**
Relating to California State Preschool Program: part-day preschool: fees.
Awaiting Hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee

The Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families was created by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) in 1984. Its mission is to enhance the well-being of children and families in Los Angeles County.

We support AB 1902 (Bonta), which would repeal the requirement to assess and collect fees for families with children in part-day preschool in the California State Preschool Program (CSPP).

Existing law provides that a child is eligible for part-day preschool if the child is three to four years old and receives aid, meets income eligibility criteria, is homeless or if the family has children that are recipients of protective services or identified as victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The existing law further requires that fees be assessed and collected for families with children in part-day CSPP. From 1965 through July 2012, families with children enrolled in a part-day state preschool program were exempt from paying a family fee.

A fee is now collected according to a family fee schedule based on the income of the family and the family size. For example, a family of four earning \$2,860 a month or \$34,320 annually is assessed \$3.45 per day or \$69 monthly if the child attends daily. If the family received Wraparound child care services in order to get full day care, the family pays the full-day fee. Fees may be exempt if one of the following applies: a child is at-risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation; a family receives child protective services or has a certification from a county child welfare agency that child care service is necessary, and the family receives CalWORKs.

The Honorable Mike Gatto, Chair
May 9, 2014
Page. 2

According to child care and developmental service contractors, the fee has deterred families from enrolling or remaining in the CSPP and resulted in a significant workload increase to assess and collect fees. Families that do enroll and are unable to pay tend to drop out of the program after a few months, some without ever paying the fees. Contractors also report that slots are not filled due to the fees.

Assembly Member Bonta states, "Family fees for part-day preschool have reduced access to valuable early child education programs by creating a financial hardship for families and have generated a large administrative burden for CSPP contractors, including the use of additional time and resources to manage the high turnover in enrollment and the complex system of collecting fees, which compromise the stability of the classroom."

The California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) states, "The imposition of this fee has caused an undue burden on both families and on State Preschool Programs. For low-income families eligible for state preschool services even a few dollars per day to pay for these fees can impose significant cost resulting in fewer children receiving the high quality early education services they need in order to be ready for kindergarten, and to succeed in school and in life." Research has shown that high quality early education programs can affect future academic achievement. A 2009 report from the RAND Corporation concludes that preschool can be a solution for raising achievement overall and in narrowing achievement gaps between groups of students.

According to Jacquelyn McCroskey, Professor of Child Welfare at University of Southern California and member of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development, AB 1902 would help in facilitating pre-school placements for young children in the child welfare system by removing bureaucratic and burdensome fee assessment screenings.

AB 1902 passed the Assembly Education Committee by a vote of 7 to 10 on April 23, 2014. It now proceeds to the State Assembly Committee on Appropriations. The bill is supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Advancement Project, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, California Head Start Association, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, Children Now, and numerous other agencies and individuals. There is no registered opposition.

Therefore, I ask for your "AYE" vote on AB 1902 to eliminate these hardships for families and state preschool programs. Please contact me at (213) 974-1558 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Genevra Berger, Chair
Los Angeles County
Commission for Children and Families

The Honorable Mike Gatto, Chair
May 9, 2014
Page. 3

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- c: Each member, Board of Supervisors
- Each member, California Assembly Appropriations Committee
- Rob Bonta, Assembly Member
- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Officer of the Board
- County Counsel
- Director, Department of Children and Family Services
- Board of Supervisors Children's Deputies
- Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development
- California Alliance of Child and Family Services
- Children's Rights Project at Public Counsel
- Legal Advocates for Children and Youth
- National Center for Youth Law